

THE POCOHONTAS TIMES

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CALVIN W. PRICE, EDITOR.

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There used to be a covered bridge at Marlinton across the Greenbrier River. It was built about 1851, and it was the sop to Carebus who was guarding the treasury when great turnpike schemes were being carried out in Richmond. This was one of the bridges which came through the Civil War. Armies marched back and forth over the bridge and it figured in battles and retreats, but as it happened the critical occasions did not occur in time of flood except once, and that was during Averell's raid, and then they kindled a fire that my grandma Price was able to scatter.

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Before it was torn down, I went across it one morning and saw an old Confed examining the walls. It was my very good friend James Schisler, of Greenbrier County. He said he was looking for the loop hole that he had used during the war.

As near as I can figure it out there was but one time that they had a battle here at Marlinton, during the Civil War, though it was for months at a time a fortified camp. And I never understood the nature of the controversy at that time, and I am pretty sure that none of the local people here on either side ever understood it. All they knew was that there were soldiers stationed at the bridge and suddenly the bottom was full of blue coats and and there was much firing and cavalry charging and an awful racket, and the Confederates retreated west and south, and the yankees went away.

Dr. George B. Moffett was here that day. He was the father of the president of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, the one that the umpire fined twenty-nine million dollars. That president said that the fine did not hurt so much as the attorney's fees that the company had to pay.

Dr. Moffett withdrew that day. In telling about it afterwards he said: "Well, I thought I had a fairly fleet

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Col. Gratton Miller was here that day. He told us children about it forty odd years ago. He said that he ran through the bridge and got so much dust in his lungs that he could not run and he dared not stop. "Why could you not stop?" "Because I had to run or get shot in the back." So it is to be presumed that he was moving rapidly.

But after so long a time I think I have been able to figure out what the fuss was about, and if you will bear with me as long as the tale unfolds, I will try to pass it on to you. That is the reason that I would rather write than speak. In writing I am not interrupted and I do not suffer from the sight of weariness.

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It will be remembered that the war broke out in 1861, and that for a time Pocahontas county was the objective of both armies. That is the glorious year in the history of this county. The strength of the militia just before the war was six hundred and fifty, and yet before June 10th, over five hundred had entered the Confederate army from Pocahontas county. Robert E. Lee spent something like two months here in the summer of 1861, between Huntersville and Linwood. His exact whereabouts during that time can be traced by the letters that he wrote during his stay in this county.

There had been considerable fighting in Tygarts Valley as the confederates fell back before McClellan and Rosecrans. The federals dug in at Elkwater, and Lee fortified the passes through Valley Mountain and Middle Mountain. The federals had fortified White Top of Cheat Mountain on the Staunton & Parkersburg Turnpike. Lee tried to get Loring's

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It is pretty plain reading between the lines that Lee was worried about not having word from Loring about whether he had got across or not, and sent Major John A. Washington with a handful of men to reconnoiter and see if he saw a confederate army marching up the river by some hook or crook. And Washington kept looking and looking in vain for such a force and got so near the fortifications in trying to discover the lost army that he was fired upon and killed.

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At Huttonsville that winter the 25th Ohio was camped, and with them was Major George Webster of that regiment. General Milroy was in command of the forces at that time and he conceived a plan to let the young major have a chance to lead a small army into the Greenbrier Valley by the way of the Old Field Fork of Elk to Marlins Bottom, it having been about two weeks since he found the upper road across the Greenbrier Valley blocked at Top of Allegheny. Webster entered upon his cam-

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paign with enthusiasm and he executed his orders with neatness and dispatch. His little army was made up of 400 soldiers from his own regiment. They marched by the Elk water fort and there he picked up 300 men from the Second West Virginia, and at Linwood he was joined by a little troop of 38 of Bracken's cavalry. He had loaded up his supply wagons and the army of 738 men moved south into the country of the rebel angels. He started from Huttonsville, December 31, 1861, at 1 p. m. The road follows the Tygarts Valley River to its head at Mingo, and from there it crosses over the Valley Mountain where it strikes the upper waters of the Dry Branch of Elk, at the postoffice of Mace. The road descends a little along the foot of the great Cheat Mountain whose southern end faces this little valley. The road then climbs again for part of a mile to the gap between Cheat Mountain and Middle Mountain. Then down the long slope by the camp that General Robert E Lee had vacated some months before. Then down the Big Spring Branch of

Then down the Big Spring Branch of Elk to the Hugh Sharp place, then across a divide to the waters of Slaty Fork of Elk by L. D. Sharp's store, and then across another divide to the Old Field Fork of Elk, so called from an old Indianfield near Mary's Chapel. I remember Dr. Lacy's dilemma when he came to change the name of this chapel, from Saint Mary's Chapel, about the time it was dedicated in 1888 to Mary's Chapel. The original name did not appeal to the old iron-sides.

The route lay up the Old Field Fork of Elk for seven or eight miles and when Webster's army reached the place that Crooked Fork of Elk turns to encircle the upper reaches of Gauley River, they found the timber barricade cut into the narrow defile the fall before when Lee's army withdrew from the waters of Elk to the waters of Greenbrier. This barricade was a formidable one for the trees were all cut for more than a mile. I remember it very distinctly. Webster reached this blockade on the evening of January 2nd, and there were so many trees across the pike that he concluded that it would be impossible for him to cut them out so that his wagons could continue to go forward without losing too much

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He found a path to the left, on J. C. Gay's side of the blockade and he climbed to the top of the mountain in that way, early on the morning of January 3rd.

When Webster got to the top of Elk Mountain on the Gay place he could look down on the valley of the Greenbrier like whatyoumaycallhim looked down on Italy from the Alps. He could see the tents of the winter camp of the company who had started to winter on the Ingen Patch, that part of the city limits now occupied by the Union Tanning Company. Another company (Louisiana) was camped down the river on the *west side where the old Price place is.* They had cut every tree on the plantation of any size except a walnut and a hickory that the children begged the colonel to spare.

Marlins Bottom was fortified.

was camped down in the woods side by side with the plantation of any size except a walnut and a hickory that the children begged the colonel to spare.

Marlins Bottom was fortified against invasion from the north. The old pike came up a little hill and dropped down to the bridge head. On top of this hill was a cannon. A part of embankment can still be seen. On the east of the river on the bank was a trench for rifle fire extending the length of the Tannery Row of tenement houses, with another cannon styled where there is now a big oak where the road topped the bank from the Marlin ford. These fortifications commanded the turnpike at a distance of some four hundred yards and made the road extremely dangerous as a passway.

Webster marched his command down Elk Mountain through the loyal village of Edray, across the flats to Drennen's Ridge, and down that ridge into the rebel settlement of Marlins Bottom. At or about the mouth of Stony Creek, a mile above

the bridge, he stopped long enough to send his squad of cavalry across the river at the Gay place, and they galloped down the east bank of the river and came out on the bottom land and to the Huntersville road, firing and acting outrageous, while Webster's infantry came down the west of the road. The cavalry cutting in behind the confederates caused them to stampede and most of them made it across the bridge to the west side and they all fled south and west into the woods. This engagement while a very noisy one resulted in no loss by death or wounding on either side.

And it hardly halted the advance of the federals. They crossed the bridge and advanced on Huntersville, six miles distant, driving before them some mounted confederates. Huntersville was the county seat of Pocahontas county, and was located about four miles from Camp Northwest. It had seen some big armies during the year 1861, and when Lee left everything in charge of Loring, the confederates made their

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Webster had left Captain Johnson with fifty men to guard the wagons at the barricade. So now he left Captain Williams and fifty men to guard Greenbrier Bridge.

When Webster arrived at the ford

T. S. McNeel F. F. McLaughlin

McNEEL & McLAUGHLIN

of Knapps Creek at the place where J. H. Buzzard lives he found the confederate cavalry on the south side of the creek in a level bottom field with Knapps Creek on one side of them and their line extending up and over a hilly spur that jutted out into the field, the line crossing the turnpike. Webster sent a detachment up the mountain to turn the confederate's right while the rest of his command marched upon their front and the firing became general on both sides. But the confederates perceiving that the federals on the north side of the creek were encircling them, the confederates fell back and formed a new line of battle across the pike and along Cummings Creek near the town. The pickets coming in from Marlins Bottom had reported the federal force to be about five thousand men.

Webster crossed at the ford at J.

bank of the creek, and the rest of the troops advanced forward. After some firing the confederates mounted their horses and retreated to the town, and as the federal troops entered the town from the west side, the confederates left by the east side.

The number of confederates engaged at Huntersville was about four hundred regular cavalry, several hundred citizens of the county, recruited the day before, and two companies of infantry.

In the meantime, at Camp Alleghany, General Edward Johnson was filled with apprehension. This was the Kentucky general. An old lady told me that his ears flapped when his horse trotted. General Johnson's scouts had reported the forward movement of the federals as being 5000 men, and Johnson figured out that they would circle around by way of Huntersville, Frost, and Crabbottom, and detach him violently from his base, at Monterey.

men to which Webster marched into Hub-
tersville he found it deserted. Not a
soul was living there. The court-
house and jail and stores, and
houses were all empty. War had
come too close to them, and the
countyseat and largest town of the
county was abandoned by its popula-
tion. It remained in this condition
for most of the war, and the soldiers
used the Presbyterian church for a
camp. and the houses were abused.
Windows were broken and the doors
left swinging, and an old timer told
me that this the scene of much social
life and gaiety became one of the
drearliest sights that he had ever
observed.

A civilian came to the Webster
command and told him that the peo-
ple had moved out and taken their
belongings. ~~the~~ ^{the} confederate general had told them
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When the town was captured January 3rd, large army supplies were found stored there. There were 350 barrels of flour, 150,000 pounds of beef, 30,000 pounds of salt, and large quantities of sugar, coffee, rice, bacon and clothing.

Not being able to move anything, fire was set to the stores and they were destroyed.

Then Webster turned and marched his men back to his wagons that night in the sleet and driving rain, having fought two engagements, and marched something like twenty-eight miles on foot. That was a big days work. It took an hour and a half to drive the confederates a mile, and he was in Huntersville two hours destroying rebel stores.

It is no wonder that the local people did not

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It is no wonder that the local people did not understand the movements on that day, for the confederate commanders did not know what was happening to them. Webster's return march from Huntersville was what they had not counted on. They went on the basis that a big army was on the move, and looked for it to go almost any way but back. They figured on a march to the White Sulphur Springs, or on the Central Railroad at Millboro, or to Monterey.

But the little federal army marching so jaunty with their young commander had no notion of penetrating farther into the strongholds of the confederacy than any union army had reached up to that time, and he had swept the country clean as he went along and extricated his army with much neatness and dispatch. The 4th and 5th of January, were spent

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But the little federal army marching so jaunty with their young commander had no notion of penetrating farther into the strongholds of the confederacy than any union army had reached up to that time, and he had swept the country clean as he went along and extricated his army with much neatness and dispatch. The 4th and 5th of January, were spent in marching back from the barricade to Elkwater. On the night of the 5th they were in the fortifications at Elkwater, where they were royally entertained by the soldiers at that camp, and on the morning of the 6th they were in their old headquarters at Huttonsville. They had pulled out on a Tuesday and they got back the following Monday, and it was as fine a little campaign as every a set of youngsters put over. Major George Webster, of the 25th Regiment Ohio Volunteers, Commanding Huntersville Expedition, was there and back again, with all his men and

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ATTENTION

Creek at the place where General Lee found the cavalry on the south side of creek in a level bottom field opposite Creek on one side of hills extending up and spur that jutted out from the line crossing the Spangler and a detachment up to burn the confederate line the rest of the column upon their front and because general on both the confederates and the federals on the north.

CROSS were attacking confederates fell back and the line of battle across the Cummings Creek line. The pickets moving to the bottom had reported trees to be about two

feet at the foot and beyond the line that the confederates had come up the woods on the hill. Dragoon cavalry to the left towards the creek, and the rest of them forward. After confederates retreated and retreated to the federal troops entered the west side, the by the the east side. of confederates on the south side was about four cavalry, several from the county, recruited and two companies

time, at Camp Allen Edward Job Smith was chosen. This was general. An old lady ears flapped when

General Johnson's

date agreed on the strategy of the federal army as being soon and instead of the 10th that it actually was. The same week of the Manassas expedition, Sumner, the commanding general, had the several lines. In that town a federal company was stationed under Captain Edward. The town was attacked by 100 Confederates. The federal company retreated to Manassas, and the Confederates pursued the town and took what was left across the Bull Run River. Col. Creek with four companies were in pursuit of the confederates, continued to the opposite bank and killed all, who escaped to the town. On the 10th, Col. Jackson reported an expectation of 1000 volunteers and intended them to the town to Manassas and killed 1000 and burned several houses. This was about the time when Jackson was operating in the mountains.

During Jackson's retreat with all of Manassas they met the 10th, the 11th, the 12th and 13th in the line of the confederates and left them flying, with their original names except the 10th.

This battle was reported to Jackson's army and the effect of a portion of the column having captured and capturing the town into the federal army with a general of the 10th, whose authority was recognized by a large number of the citizens for some years.

There was another skirmish at Manassas Junction, April 18, 1863. Captain J. W. Marshall's company, of the 13th Virginia Cavalry, C. S. A. drove upon a company of federal soldiers, identifying unknown, a closed line north towards Edney.

For Sale

Lots and houses and property, houses